

Working With a Different Medium: The Arts, New Technologies, and ArtsBridge

The introduction and rapid infusion of new technologies into schools has presented a host of opportunities and challenges for arts educators and arts outreach programs. For example, software such as Finale (and its free counterpart Notepad) provides tools for aspiring composers and musicians. The advent of the portable synthesizer, drum pad, and methods such as Musical Instrument Digital Interface (MIDI) has brought **virtual symphonies into the classroom**. Programs such as HyperStudio, Kid Pix, Photoshop and Paint Brush allow pupils to **pursue their creative instincts using multiple media**, including photographs, original artwork, and music. Digital cameras and DVDs capture performances and provide ArtsBridge Scholars and pupils alike with a **visual mechanism to assess and provide feedback on performances**. Internet access affords pupils unique opportunities to **visit museums and works of art without leaving school grounds, view live and archived performances using streaming video, and communicate with peers and established artists via e-mail and distance learning technologies**. Finally, storage media such as CD Rom and ZIP disks allow Scholars, teachers, and pupils to create electronic portfolios of students' art works and facilitate the process of **amassing works for display and publication**.



Harold Olejarz (1996) suggests that the arts can be transformed by the use of new technologies. According to his essay *Integrating Technology into the Art Curriculum*, "In art education, technology will continue to have a profound effect on the teaching of art. Art educators will continually be confronted with the challenge of integrating new information and technology into their art curriculum." **This is not to say that technologies will soon take the place of more traditional materials**—indeed, it would be hard for one to conceive of a painting without chalks, oils, and watercolors—but it is to say that they do have a role in the arts as we enter the new millennium.

As a university-based arts education outreach program partnering with primary and secondary schools, **it is fundamental for ArtsBridge to examine the extent to which new technologies are integrated into scholars' work with pupils and how they are used in concert with arts instruction and more traditional media**. Because of weighty emphases on technology in a number of curricular areas beyond the arts, and in part due to the cost efficiency associated with its use in schools (for example, consider the costs associated with the purchase and care of a synthesizer versus a grand piano), it is likely that we will see a greater degree of technology employed in arts education. ArtsBridge is no exception to this rule.

Through the Center for Arts Research in Education (CARE), ArtsBridge has launched a survey designed to lend insight into technology use by its scholars across the University of California system. Findings from these instruments will be incorporated in **research briefs and more comprehensive reports that illuminate patterns of use as well as perceived impacts and implementation issues**. As technologies become increasingly sophisticated and at the same time more accessible to the general public, ArtsBridge will continue to explore their role in providing high quality arts instruction for K-12 pupils and professional support for teachers.